



LINCOLN CHAFEE

U.S. SENATOR

RHODE ISLAND

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CONTACT: Stephen Hourahan
202-224-6167

CHAFEE LAUDS MEASURE TO IMPROVE QUALITY OF LIFE FOR MILITARY MEMBERS

WASHINGTON, D.C. – U.S. Senator Lincoln Chafee (R-RI) today lauded the release of the House-Senate conference report on the Military Quality of Life and Veterans Affairs and Related Agencies appropriations bill for fiscal year 2006.

“I am pleased that the House and Senate have come together to craft a bipartisan bill which will truly benefit those who have dedicated themselves to our country by serving in our military,” said Senator Chafee. “This bill provides an increase in funding for veteran’s medical services, and allocates substantial dollars for military housing and other construction projects,” he continued.

Within the bill are provisions to fund Veterans Medical Care and Benefits, Military Construction, base realignment and closure (BRAC) activities, among other measures.

The bill would fund Veterans Medical Services at \$22.5 billion, \$575 million above the Administration’s budget request and \$1.7 billion above the fiscal year 2005 amount. Over the last two years, funding for Veterans medical care has increased by 18%. In addition, for the first time ever, \$2.2 billion has been designated for specialty mental health care with funding doubled for mental health research. Altogether, Veteran’s benefits will be increased \$1.9 billion over last year.

In addition, if given final approval, the bill will fund total military construction at \$6.2 billion, \$5.11 billion for active duty construction and \$1.1 billion for reserve components. Furthermore, \$4.02 billion has been allocated for family housing construction and operations, \$223 million above the request to continue the goal of providing adequate housing for our service members and their families.

The bill also requires a comprehensive study on Post Traumatic Stress Disorder, which will focus on improving mental health research, care, and access to information.

Also included is \$50 million for various force protection measures for soldiers stationed in Iraq.

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